Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) An exposure apparatus, in which the space between a projection optical system which projects a pattern onto an object and an object placed on the image-plane side of the projection optical system is filled with a liquid, and exposure to the pattern is performed through the liquid, comprising:

an opposing member, positioned apart from the object in the direction of the optical axis of the projection optical system; and

a control device, which, in response to notification of occurrence of an abnormality, moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction.

8. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the control device, in response to notification of occurrence of an earthquake, moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction.

9. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the object is movable within the plane perpendicular to the optical axis, and the control device, in response to notification of abnormal operation of the object, moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction.

10. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising an elevating device which moves the object in the optical axis direction and a driving device which drives the opposing member in the optical axis direction,

wherein the control device controls at least one of the elevating device and the driving device to move apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

11. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a first frame which supports the opposing member, and wherein the driving device is a vibration isolation device which supports the opposing member, movably in the optical axis direction, through the first frame.

12. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a second vibration isolation device which supports the object movably along the optical axis direction,

wherein the control device controls at least one of the elevating device, the vibration isolation device, and the second vibration isolation device to move apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

13. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the driving device drives the opposing member, relative to the projection optical system, in the optical axis direction.

14. (Currently Amended) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein ~~the object is a substrate for exposure to the pattern or a substrate stage holding the substrate, and movable with at least three degrees of freedom.~~the object is a wafer that is transferred from an outside.

15. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the opposing member comprises at least one of a liquid supply device which supplies liquid to the space between the projection optical system and the object, and a liquid recovery device which recovers the liquid.

16. (Currently Amended) A device manufacturing method, comprising a lithography process, wherein in the lithography process, an exposure apparatus according to ~~claim 1~~claim 7 is used.

17. (Previously Presented) An exposure apparatus, in which the space between a projection optical system which projects a pattern onto an object and the object placed on the image-plane side of the projection optical system is filled with a liquid, and exposure to the pattern is performed through the liquid, comprising:

an opposing member, positioned apart from the object in a direction of the optical axis of the projection optical system, and being movable relative to the projection optical system in the optical axis direction;

a first frame which supports the opposing member;

an elevating device which moves the object in the optical axis direction;

a vibration isolation device which supports the opposing member, movably in the optical axis direction, through the first frame; and

a control device, which, in response to notification of occurrence of an abnormality, controls at least one of the elevating device and the vibration isolation device to move apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

18. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the control device, in response to notification of occurrence of an earthquake, moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction.

19. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the object is movable within the plane perpendicular to the optical axis, and the control device, in response to notification of abnormal operation of the object, moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction.

20. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the vibration isolation device has a driving device, and the control device controls the driving device to move apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

21. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising a second vibration isolation device which supports the object movably along the optical axis direction,

wherein the control device controls at least one of the elevating device, the vibration isolation device, and the second vibration isolation device to move apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

22. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising a driving device which drives the opposing member, relative to the projection optical system, in the optical axis direction.

23. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the object is a substrate for exposure to the pattern or a substrate stage holding the substrate, and movable with at least three degrees of freedom.

24. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the opposing member comprises at least one of a liquid supply device which supplies liquid to the space between the projection optical system and the object, and a liquid recovery device which recovers the liquid.

25. (Previously Presented) A device manufacturing method, comprising a lithography process, wherein in the lithography process, an exposure apparatus according to claim 17 is used.

26-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the control device determines the occurrence of the abnormality using a value stored in advance.

30. (Previously Presented) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the object is a plurality of substrate stages, each of which holds a substrate for exposure to the pattern, and is movable with at least three degrees of freedom, and

upon occurrence of an abnormality in either of the substrate stages, the substrate stage and the opposing member are moved mutually away from each other along the optical axis direction.

31-39. (Canceled)

40. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the opposing member and the projection optical system both oppose the object.

41. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the opposing member is movable along the optical axis direction with regard to the projection optical system.

42. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the opposing member is provided in a vicinity of the projection optical system, and

the opposing member fills the liquid between the projection optical system and the object and forms an immersion area.

43. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the opposing member contacts with the liquid.

44. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the control device moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction when a distance between the object and the opposing member is such that the object and the opposing member are to collide.

45. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein

the exposure apparatus is provided on a floor, and

the control device moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction when an abnormal vibration occurs to the floor.

46. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the opposing member and the projection optical system both oppose the object.

47. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the opposing member is movable along the optical axis direction with regard to the projection optical system.

48. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the opposing member is provided in a vicinity of the projection optical system, and

the opposing member fills the liquid between the projection optical system and the object and forms an immersion area.

49. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the opposing member contacts with the liquid.

50. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the object is a wafer that is transferred from an outside.

51. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the control device moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction when a distance between the object and the opposing member is such that the object and the opposing member are to collide.

52. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 17, wherein

the exposure apparatus is provided on a floor, and

the control device moves the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction when an abnormal vibration occurs to the floor.

53. (New) An exposure apparatus that transfers a wafer from an outside, exposes the wafer with an exposure light through a liquid, and forms a predetermined pattern on the wafer, the exposure apparatus comprising:

an optical member that illuminates the wafer with the exposure light;

a wafer table that is provided at an image plane side of the optical member, and that movably holds the wafer;

an opposing member that is provided apart from the wafer table along an optical axis direction of the optical member, and that is movable along the optical axis direction with respect to the optical member; and

a vibration isolation device that supports the optical member and the opposing member while preventing vibrations.

54. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, further comprising:

a support member that supports the optical member and the opposing member;

wherein the vibration isolation device supports the optical member and the opposing member through the support member.

55. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, further comprising:

a first driving device that moves the opposing member along the optical axis direction; and

a support member that supports the optical member and the first driving device,

wherein the vibration isolation device supports the optical member and the opposing member through the support member.

56. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

a distance from a position at which the vibration isolation device supports the support member to the optical axis is larger than a distance from a position at which the support member supports the first driving device to the optical axis, when projected along the optical axis on a two-dimensional plane that is perpendicular to the optical axis.

57. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

the opposing member and the wafer table switchably take either a first state or a second state,

the first state being a state in which the opposing member maintains a predetermined distance from the wafer table along the optical axis, and

the second state being a state in which a distance from the opposing member to the wafer table is greater than in the first state, and

the wafer is illuminated with the exposure light when the opposing member and the wafer table are in the first state.

58. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

the opposing member includes at least one of a liquid supply device or a liquid recovery device, the liquid supply device providing a liquid between the optical member and the wafer that is supported by the wafer table, and the liquid recovery device recovering the liquid.

59. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, further comprising:

a control device that moves the wafer table and the opposing member apart along the optical axis, in response to a notification of an abnormality.

60. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 59, wherein

the control device moves the wafer table and the opposing member apart along the optical axis, in response to a notification of an earthquake.

61. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 59, further comprising:

a second driving device that moves the wafer table along the optical axis,

wherein the control device controls at least one of the first driving device and the second driving device, and moves the wafer table and the opposing member apart along the optical axis.

62. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

the vibration isolation device supports the opposing member movably along the optical axis direction.

63. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 59, wherein

the control device drives the first driving device in accordance with a positional relationship between the opposing member and the wafer table.

64. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

the opposing member and the projection optical system both oppose to the wafer table.

65. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

the opposing member is movable along the optical axis direction, with respect to the projection optical system.

66. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

the opposing member is provided in a vicinity of the optical member, and

the opposing member fills the liquid between the optical member and the wafer and forms an immersion area.

67. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 53, wherein

the opposing member contacts with the liquid.

68. (New) A device manufacturing method, comprising a lithography process, wherein in said lithography process, an exposure apparatus according to claim 53 is used.

69. (New) An exposure method, in which the space between a projection optical system which projects a pattern onto an object and an object placed on the image-plane side of the projection optical system is filled with a liquid, and exposure to the pattern is performed through the liquid, the method comprising:

positioning an opposing member apart from the object in the direction of the optical axis of the projection optical system; and

moving the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction, in response to notification of occurrence of an abnormality.

70. (New) The exposure method according to claim 69, further comprising:

moving the object in the optical axis direction using an elevating device; and

driving the opposing member in the optical axis direction using a driving device,

wherein at least one of the elevating device and the driving device moves apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

71. (New) The exposure method according to claim 70, further comprising:

supporting the opposing member using a first frame,

wherein the driving device is a vibration isolation device which supports the opposing member, movably in the optical axis direction, through the first frame.

72. (New) The exposure method according to claim 71, further comprising:

supporting the object movably along the optical axis direction using a second vibration isolation device,

wherein at least one of the elevating device, the vibration isolation device, and the second vibration isolation device moves apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

73. (New) The exposure method according to claim 69, further comprising:

providing the opposing member in a vicinity of the projection optical system; and

forming an immersion area using the opposing member by filling the liquid between the projection optical system and the object.

74. (New) The exposure method according to claim 69, further comprising:

moving the object and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction, when a distance between the object and the opposing member is such that the object and the opposing member are to collide, using the control device.

75. (New) An exposure method, in which the space between a projection optical system which projects a pattern onto an object and the object placed on the image-plane side of the projection optical system is filled with a liquid, and exposure to the pattern is performed through the liquid, the method comprising:

positioning an opposing member apart from the object in a direction of the optical axis of the projection optical system, the opposing member being movable relative to the projection optical system in the optical axis direction;

supporting the opposing member using a first frame;

moving the object in the optical axis direction using an elevating device;

supporting the opposing member, movably in the optical axis direction, through the first frame, using a vibration isolation device; and

controlling at least one of the elevating device and the vibration isolation device to move apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction, in response to notification of occurrence of an abnormality.

76. (New) The exposure method according to claim 75, further comprising:

supporting the object movably along the optical axis direction using a second vibration isolation device,

wherein at least one of the elevating device, the vibration isolation device, and the second vibration isolation device moves apart the object and the opposing member along the optical axis direction.

77. (New) An exposure method that transfers a wafer from an outside, exposes the wafer with an exposure light through a liquid, and forms a predetermined pattern on the wafer, the exposure method comprising:

illuminating the wafer with the exposure light using an optical member;

providing a wafer table at an image plane side of the optical member;

movably holding the wafer using the wafer table;

providing an opposing member apart from the wafer table along an optical axis direction of the optical member, the opposing member being movable along the optical axis direction with respect to the optical member; and

supporting the optical member and the opposing member, while preventing vibrations, using a vibration isolation device.

78. (New) The exposure method according to claim 77, further comprising:

moving the opposing member along the optical axis direction using a first driving device; and

supporting the optical member and the first driving device using a support member,

wherein the vibration isolation device supports the optical member and the opposing member through the support member.

79. (New) The exposure method according to claim 77, wherein

the opposing member and the wafer table switchably take either a first state or a second state,

the first state being a state in which the opposing member maintains a predetermined distance from the wafer table along the optical axis, and

the second state being a state in which a distance from the opposing member to the wafer table is greater than in the first state, and

the wafer is illuminated with the exposure light when the opposing member and the wafer table are in the first state.

80. (New) The exposure method according to claim 77, further comprising:

moving the wafer table along the optical axis using a second driving device; and

moving the wafer table and the opposing member apart along the optical axis direction by controlling at least one of the first driving device and the second driving device.

81. (New) The exposure apparatus according to claim 77, further comprising:

driving the first driving device, in accordance with a positional relationship, between the opposing member and the wafer table.